



2013 CONCORD ANNUAL TOWN REPORT

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MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT

Concord Municipal Light Board

Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee

COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE



From left: Gordon Brockway, Gilda Gussin, Gayle Chatlosh, Jane Hotchkiss, Mark Myles, Alan Whitney, Jill Appel. Not pictured: Ruthy Bennett

The purpose of the Comprehensive Sustainable Energy Committee is to assist the Town with identifying, designing, and implementing programs and projects to foster energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy generation and to track and report the financial and environmental impacts of such programs. Programs and projects should address all forms of energy use: electricity, natural gas and heating oil, transportation fuels, and energy use in all segments of town: municipal, business, nonprofit and residential.

Prior to 2013, CSEC spent the majority of its time working to reduce energy consumption and resulting carbon dioxide emissions in municipal buildings and operations by identifying projects and targeting funding through the Alfred H. Sawyer Trust. The Sawyer Trust was established in 2008 with a \$1.7 million gift to the town for the purpose of promoting energy and other resource conservation in public facilities. To date, approximately 75% of the Fund has been

expended on a number of projects in many municipal buildings. Through the end of 2012, Sawyer Trust projects have reduced natural gas consumption in Town buildings by 25% and electricity consumption by 9% when compared to a 2008 baseline. 2013 results are not yet available, but two additional projects completed in 2013 to upgrade the pool pumps and lighting at the Beede Center should result in an additional savings of 10% in electricity consumption.

In 2012, in its initial effort to reach out to the greater Concord community, CSEC worked with the Concord Municipal Light Plant and a number of vendors to conduct a Solar Fair, the purpose of which was to showcase solar electricity (photovoltaics, or PV for short), solar hot water, high-efficiency LED (light-emitting diode) lighting, and home energy monitoring and efficiency improvement. More than 200 people attended the fair, and 32 additional residential PV systems and 10 solar hot water systems were installed in the Concord community as a result of the event.

In early 2013, CSEC saw that solar PV prices were declining significantly, that many generous financial incentives existed to support PV installations, and that the MA Department of Energy Resources had recently sponsored a number of successful community-based programs through its Solarize Mass program. CSEC decided to pursue its own community-wide program modelled on the Solarize Mass program in order to dramatically increase the number of solar PV installations in Town. The committee interviewed several solar installers who had participated in Solarize Mass and selected Astrum Solar as Concord's installer partner under a group pricing arrangement.

The Concord Solar Challenge kicked off in April and officially ended on December 15. During the Challenge, 540 Concord residents, businesses and nonprofits requested site surveys and 160 of them signed PV contracts for a total of 1.3 megawatts in solar power, reducing Concord's carbon emissions by over 1 million pounds every year. At the end of 2013, about 100 of the systems have been installed. As a bonus for Concord's success, in 2014 Astrum Solar will donate \$14,700 (\$100 for each contract signed on or before October 31st) to a Town solar PV installation at the McGrath farm, a recent town purchase for agricultural use and affordable housing. Installation is expected in March/April 2014.

The Concord Solar Challenge goes on record as the most successful

community-based solar PV program in the Commonwealth, and CSEC members have been contacted by a number of other MA communities who want to learn about our program and apply our practices to their communities. Astrum Solar has performed professionally and admirably throughout the Challenge. CSEC is deeply grateful to the Concord Municipal Light Plant and the Concord Building Department for making the program a success, to the Selectmen and the Municipal Light Board for their general support and assistance in resolving issues, and to the Historic District Commission for being receptive to solar power in Concord's historic district. And finally, CSEC would like to thank the citizens of Concord for being willing to consider solar power for their homes, businesses and nonprofit organizations. It truly has been a pleasure meeting and working with you.

CSEC is currently working on its next community-based program, in which we plan to help Concord citizens reduce heating oil consumption by weatherizing homes and considering a high-efficiency electric heat pump as a primary heating system. For this program, CSEC is designing community outreach to residents who heat with oil, identifying the right incentives and working to put them in place, qualifying heat pump equipment alternatives and vendors, and finding ways to support citizens as they go through the process.

On December 18, Concord was designated a Green Community by the Patrick Administration, joining 122 other Green Communities in the Commonwealth. Concord's Green Communities application was submitted on October 30 and consisted of several parts, as follows:

- documents demonstrating as-of-right siting and expedited permitting for renewable energy facilities
- evidence of the town's adoption of the Stretch Code requirements for building construction and major renovation in town
- an Energy Reduction Plan identifying the projects Concord will complete to reduce its municipal energy consumption by 20% five years from the baseline year of 2011
- Concord's fuel-efficient vehicle policy and list of town vehicles

Concord will receive a base year grant of \$147,000 that will largely

be dedicated to replacing the heating system at the Peabody Middle School. Once this project is complete, there will be opportunities to apply for additional grants from the Department of Energy Resources. Concord's Green Communities application was a team effort involving the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen, CSEC, the Concord Municipal Light Plant, the Planning Department, the School Department and the School Committee. CSEC would like to express its appreciation to all of these contributors and looks forward to working together as Concord focuses even more intently on energy conservation.

CSEC is a dynamic group of citizens with a commitment to sponsoring policies and programs that help reduce energy consumption in a manner that works well for the Concord community. We welcome community input and participation.